Faithfully Yours

Monthly e-newsletter

January 2026

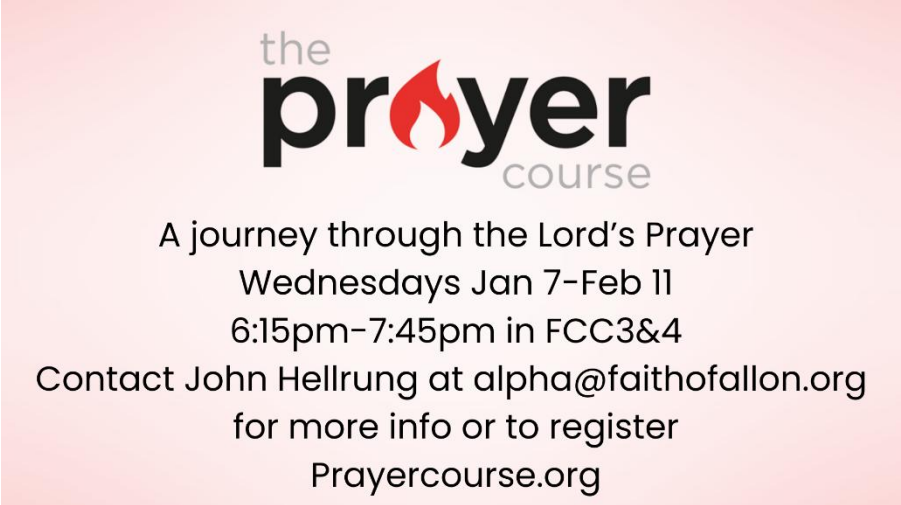
Angels: Finding Hope in God Who Reigns over Heaven and Earth (8 weeks) by Jim Curtis

The Bible speaks of angels often. They were present in the garden of Eden, and throughout the story of the Bible they appear to people with messages,

encouragement, and tangible help. Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation and before His crucifixion, and they shared the good news of His resurrection. Despite their frequent appearance in God's Word, our impression of angels is more often shaped by the myths and misconceptions that have developed over the centuries.

Did you know that angels are spiritual beings created by God, serving as His messengers and agents in the divine order. They fulfilled various roles that reflect God's will and purpose. The term "angel" is derived from the Greek word "angelos," meaning "messenger." In the Hebrew Bible, the equivalent term is "mal'akh." Angels are depicted as powerful, intelligent, and holy beings who execute God's commands and minister to His people.

Please consider taking this journey with me in this 8-session Bible study program where we will join Melissa Spoelstra, a popular religious blogger and author of theology, as she traverses the terrain of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation to learn about angels—who they are, what they do, and what they have to do with you. Each week's lesson will consist of a video and an in-depth discussion of angels from historical viewpoints, Wisdom books, Prophets' books, Gospels, the early church period, and Revelations. Sharing this journey together, we will find new hope through angels and how they have supported God's Grace to his people.



Pastor Candice

Grace and peace to you!

As we begin January 2026, we'll be diving into, "Turning the Soil: A Sermon Series on Making All Things New." This sermon series will be a preamble to an entire year of focus I'll be leading our staff and council leadership through:

Turning the Soil: A Year Shaped by the Seasons

The focus for the year is based on Hosea 10:12, "Break up your unplowed ground, for it is time to seek the Lord."

I invite you, as the congregation, to follow along with staff and council leadership with these seasonal themes:

January–April: Resting the Ground
This season is about noticing and listening. We'll pay attention to where there is life, where there is fatigue, and where something may need to rest for a time. Not everything needs fixing. Some things need space.

May–August: Loosening the Ground
As the soil softens, we'll take small, faithful risks, new conversations, deeper prayer, and honest reflection about habits that may be holding us back.

September–December: Planting and Tending
In the fall, we'll try a few new seeds, watch for signs of growth, and share stories of what God is doing among us. As the year closes, we'll rest again with gratitude.

This year isn't about doing more. It's about trusting God with the growth and being faithful in every season. I hope you'll pray for our staff and lay leaders and join us in *turning the soil* this year!

Peace & joy,
Pastor Candice Wassell

President's Pen

Happy New Year – 2026!

A heartfelt welcome to all the new church board leaders and board members. Thank you for helping Faith continue to be the wonderful faith community that it is. I look forward to supporting the new faith theme of “Turning the Soil of Our Minds, Bodies and Souls.”

Thank you to all the outgoing leaders. Thank you for your time and effort as you helped Faith be nourished in Mind, Body and Soul during your tenure. Faith is growing in so many ways, and much of it is due to your faith and leadership; so again, thank you.

My New Year’s Resolution is to be more present, to listen, feel, and experience each moment as it comes to me. I believe this will help me be a more effective leader with better understanding of issues and the emotions surrounding them. I believe being more present will also help me to understand myself better and experience God more deeply. I hope to feel more attuned to our Earth and all its’ life. Years ago, we had a group that practiced Contemplative Prayer. It was a deep, meaningful experience to sit quietly, let my thoughts drift away, and experience a calm, oneness with God.

I wish you a safe, healthy and contemplative new year.

In Christ,

Eunice Peterson
Congregational President

Admin's Turn

Here we go into 2026! Are you excited for the possibilities of the new year?

As you set your intentions and prayers for 2026, may I suggest you consider how you and Faith can continue the mission to Nourish Minds, Bodies, and Souls!

Thank you for all your support in 2025 with the Love Fund! It was a busy year…I know, I say that every year…

More and more people are trusting Faith Lutheran to care and be a helping hand when they are in need. Between the Love Fund, Community Meals, Shower Ministry, Laundry Ministry, winter coats, and Healing Prayers, people know Faith is a safe place to share their worries.

As I write this in mid-December we have pledged almost $25,000 to help our neighbors, with rent, water, and Ameren mostly! Thank you for supporting and caring for our neighbors. I look forward to our continued nourishment for their minds, bodies, and souls!

What are your plans for nourishing your own mind, body, and soul in 2026?

May I suggest a couple beyond worship:

- Jim Curtis will be leading a class on Angels starting on January 4th at 9am. You will find more details in this newsletter.
- There are many small group and Bible studies that you may want to check out – Katie's Table, Men's Breakfast, book clubs, Linger Longer, Journey On, etc. On our website (faithofallon.org), click on **What's Happening for Adults** and you will see all the options.
- Volunteer! There are so many ways you can volunteer – in worship, in service of others, in service around the church. If you need help finding a way to volunteer, please reach out to me and I can get you started.

Thank you all for your care, love, and support of not only me and my family but all of staff! We love our mission here at Faith and love working alongside each of you.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Janet Hernandez, AdminCoordinator

Youth & Children

Reflecting on a Joyful December!
Happy New Year! As we step into January 2026, I want to take a moment to look back at the incredible month we shared together in December. Our youth and children's ministries were buzzing with activity, and it was a joy to see our church family come together to celebrate the season, especially our youngest members.

Sunday School
On December 14, we wrapped up a fantastic fall semester of Sunday School. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated teachers who pour so much love into our students each week. **Sunday School will resume on January 4.** Our 5th graders begin their First Holy Communion lessons in January to prepare to receive First Communion Feb 15.

Youth Night
December 7 marked the conclusion of our inaugural semester of **Youth Night**. This program was a great success; we fed an average of 55 kids every Sunday evening, providing a convenient meal for families juggling children's music, youth groups, and confirmation. We are so grateful for the momentum we've built and look forward to an even more successful spring semester! **We resume January 4.**

Holiday Highlights & Thanks

- **RaiseRight Gift Cards:** Thank you to everyone who supported our youth ministry through gift card purchases. We raised over **$300** to fund upcoming youth activities!
- **Advent Midweek Dinner:** On December 3, we hosted the first Advent dinner of 2025. Thanks to your generosity and the hard work of our volunteers, we raised **$455**.
- **Parents' Day Out:** On December 6, our kiddo enjoyed a day of pizza, crafts, and fellowship while parents got a head start on holiday errands.
- **Children's Christmas Program:** On December 7, our kids delivered an "out of this world" performance of *O My Stars…It's Christmas* It was an overwhelming success! A huge thank you to Kristin Runyan for her leadership and to the kids for such an adorable presentation.
- **Christmas Eve Family Worship:** We closed the month with a beautiful 5:00 PM service featuring a special Children's Sermon and treats for the kids.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for our youth. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us in 2026!

Grace & Peace
Kathy Turner
Youth Director

Music Notes

January brings to us many musical opportunities to worship Jesus!

- A big THANK YOU to all our musicians that brought so many meaningful worship experiences in December. Between the mid-week services, Children's Christmas Program, Readings and Carols, and Christmas Eve services, it was overwhelming how much talent God has given to our many members. We are so grateful to those that took time to offer their gifts and skills.
- Save the Date
    - January 4th: Children's Music Rehearsals resume. New kiddos are always welcome!
        - Jr. Bells 4:15pm - 4:45pm
        - Choir 4:45pm - 5:30pm
        - Bells 5:30pm - 6:00pm
    - January 5th: Adult Music Rehearsals resume
        - Triumphant Brass: 6:30pm-7:30pm (sanctuary)
        - Worshiping Woodwinds 7:00pm-7:45 (choir room)
    - January 8th: Adult Music Rehearsals resume
        - Handbells: 5:45pm-6:45pm (sanctuary)
        - Choir: 6:45pm-7:45pm (choir room)
        - Praise Band: 7:20pm-8:15pm (sanctuary)
    - January 18th: Sunday School Classics Sunday! Join us for our favorite songs from childhood.
    - January 24th: Concert Series – USAF Band of Mid-America
- A new year brings resolutions and goals for the future. Why not gift your family by preparing your Celebration of Life? You can complete the online form (QR code to left), complete a paper copy (by Welcome Desk) or schedule a meeting with me to start the conversations. You can get as detailed or general as you like, choosing both scripture readings and hymns.

- Do you have a musical talent you would like to share in worship? Contact me to talk about what solo, duet, and

small group opportunities you have to offer your skills to the Lord to make a joyful noise!

Tune your heart to sing His praise,
Kristin Runyan

Financial Secetary's Report
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT
NOVEMBER 30, 2025

GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS	**2025 *YTD* ACTUAL**	***2025 YTD BUDGETED***	***Difference* of ACTUAL to *BUDGET***	**2025 Full Year BUDGET**
Pledged Giving*	603,361.63	*543,984.83*	59,376.80	593,438.00
Non-Pledged Giving	91,350.43	*68,750.00*	22,600.43	75,000.00
Plate Offering	6,722.65	*7,791.67*	(1,069.02)	8,500.00
Total General Fund Offerings	**701,434.71**	***620,526.50***	**80.908.21**	**676,938.00**
Other Income**	3,878.50	*4,445.83*	(567.33)	4.850.00
TOTAL General Fund Receipts* **	**705,313.21**	***624,972.33***	**80,340.88**	**681,788.00**
% of Full Year Budget Received versus Budgeted	**103.45%**	***91.67%***		

NOTES: *Actual Figures are year-to-date through NOVEMBER 30 2025*.

*The $603,361.63 of **Pledged Giving** is **$59,376.80 MORE** than the Budgeted (Expected) amount of $*543,984.83* through NOVEMBER 30. *This amount includes $86,136 in Prepaid Pledges which have been transferred from Prepaid Pledges Allocated to General Fund this year through NOVEMBER 30. All Prepaid pledges received in 2024 for 2025 have now been transferred into the General Fund.*

The total General Fund Pledges received/recorded at budget approval in November 2024, were $593,428. General Fund Pledges have increased to $637,778 currently, which accounts for much of the positive difference of Pledged Giving YTD as compared to budgeted (expected) giving.

***__Total General Fund Receipts__** of $705,313.21 were **$80,340.88 more** than the Budgeted (Expected) amount of $624,972.33 and were 103.45% of the yearly expected amount. The Budgeted expected percentage (11/12 of yearly budget) would be 91.67%.

__Other Income__ includes Thrivent Choice Dollars, Credit card rewards, and checking account interest which go into the General Fund.

PHASE 2 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE:

As a result of our Capital Campaign "Preparing Space for Grace", Faith Lutheran has received pledges from 105 Households totaling **$1,654,288** over three years from 6/1/2024 through 5/31/2027.

From 1/1/2024 through 11/30/2025, Faith has received a total of **$1,225,465.42 in** contributions from Faith givers for Phase 2, which is **74%** of the total pledges received.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jan Mikkelson, Financial Secretary

Financial Summary Report

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT – November 30, 2025

	Actual Nov 2025	Actual YTD 2025	Budget Projected (91.7%)	Actual YTD Received/ Expensed (%)
Budget Giving – Online Pledged/Unpledged	28,591.00	313,921.77		
Budget Giving – Not Online Pledged/Unpledged	31,250.15	380,790.29		
Total Budget Giving – Pledged/Unpledged	59,841.15	694,712.06	612,734.83	103.9%
Budget Giving - Plate	598.04	6,722.65	7,791.67	79.1%
Total Budget Giving	**60,439.19**	**701,434.71**	**620,526.50**	**103.6%**
Total Other Additions	1,886.69	9,314.64	4,445.83	
Total Budget + Other Additions	**62,325.88**	**710,749.35**	**624,972.33**	**104.2%**
Board Expenses (Discretionary)	4,961.51	68,723.08	69,061.67	85.9%
Building/Equipment Expenses (Fixed)	9,218.46	109,179.37	118,616.67	83.9%
Staff Salaries Expenses (Fixed)	35,732.54	403,159,16	420,982.83	87.8%
Staff Support Expenses (Fixed)	1,276.53	14,507.80	15,560.42	84.7%
Mission Support (Benevolence)	6,044.00	70,144.77	62,052.65	103.6%
Total General Fund Expensed	**57,233.04**	**665,714.18**	**686,274.23**	**88.9%**
Variance * **	**+5,092.84**	**+45,035.17**	**(61,301.90)**	
Special Offerings Received ** **	**23,370.96**	**162,377.83**		
Phase 2 Capital Campaign Received	**25,261.18**	**269,289.26**		
Total Rcvd (General+Special+Capital Campaign)	**109,071.33**	**1,133,101.80**		

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS BALANCE – November 30, 2025

Carrollton Bank Checking	$ 40,515.28
Carrollton Bank Money Market	39.06
Fidelity Investment	406,806.59
Fidelity Endowment Investment	60,015.61
Fidelity Legacy Gift	467,226.00
TOTAL	**$974,602.55**

FUND ACCOUNTS BALANCE – November 30, 2025

Allocated Funds (Restricted/Designated)	$233,749.15
Carryover Fund	97,968.27
Endowment Fund	60,000.00
Fidelity Endowment Investment Gain	15.61
Fidelity Legacy Gift Investment	467,226.00
Fidelity Investment Gain	51,674.54
General/Budget Fund	50,858.12
Mission Support (Benevolence)	12,286.53
Phase 2 Capital Campaign Fund	824.33
TOTAL	**$974.602.55**

PHASE 2 CONSTRUCTION LOAN – November 30, 2025 Balance $280,000.00

FAITH CENTER MORTGAGE – November 30, 2025 Balance $275,497.59

PHASE 2 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUND STATUS – November 30, 2025 - Pledged and Unpledged since Sept 2023

Pledged amount	Received		Total Expensed	November 30 BAL
$1,654,288.00	$1,233,210.00	**74.5%**	$1,232,385.67	$824.33

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH PROPERTY ASSET VALUE: $12,499,805 *(includes Sanctuary, Faith Center, Ed Center, offices)*

Respectfully submitted.
Susan Carlson, Accounting Manager

Programs for Young Children Happenings

It's hard to believe that we've wrapped up our first semester of the 2025-2026 school year! Our preschool days are full of play, faith, and nature. We currently serve over 80 students in Playgroup, Toddler Time, 3 Day Preschool, 2 Day Preschool, Morning PreK, Afternoon PreK, and add-on Enrichment and STEAM classes. We are grateful for the strong relationships built within our school community, fostered through parent partnerships, family events, and field trips.

At the end of January, we will open pre-registration for the 2026-2027 school year for our current PYC families and Faith Lutheran Church members. Specific class descriptions and enrollment forms can be requested at pyc@faithpyc.com. We're also available to give tours throughout the school days if you or a friend are interested. We hope you'll help us spread the word about the high quality, play-based, part-day programs we offer at PYC! Our school cultivates a loving environment for children to grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It's also a beautiful community of young families who are forever connected by their time at PYC together. It's a special place!

We thank Faith Lutheran Church for your wonderful support of our little school. Whether you follow and engage with us on our social media accounts (Facebook: Programs for Young Children Faith Lutheran Church, Instagram: @faithpyc), support our BabyTALK ministry through noisy offerings, make donations directly to PYC through online or church offertory giving, or pray for us, we are so very appreciative. We are proud to be a part of the Faith Lutheran Community and its outward ministry efforts!

Blessings,
PYC Oversight Committee
Kristin Flor, Director

Planning & Development Board

P&D met on November 18, 2025 and discussed the following items:

- Steve updated us on various steps of the Phase 3 timelines and requirements. He has prepared the RFQ to send to 4-5 Architect Firms for consideration. We also discussed the need to keep the stained glass windows from the original Sanctuary.
- Bill continues working on the next Strat Plan; expect to publish it in January 2026.
- Pastor Candice presented some possibilities for us to consider in the future regarding an assistant pastor. More research and discussion will be needed.

v/r John Masur
P&D Chair

Property Board

Property Board looking for more hands.
The property board has hands in many happenings at the church. Whether it is repairing areas of the church, tending to the grounds, doing routine maintenance items, there are always needs that have to be addressed.

We on the property board don't have monthly meetings. Rather, when issues or needs come up, I reach out to people on the board and see if they are available to take care of what needs to be fixed. It may be small, like replacing a toilet paper holder, putting caulk around a sink, paint a wall, or help with the grounds. Some items require a bit more skill or knowledge in areas like, plumbing, electrical, heating & cooling, IT with our camera's and security system or installing new water coolers.

If you have a desire to be on the property board, reach out to me and I can give you more details or answer questions you may have.

Thank you,
Mike Engel
618-978-6690

Phase 3 Update

Thanks to the congregation approval at the annual meeting, Phase 3 Planning is officially off and running. One of the first actions was negotiating a new with Poettker Construction to act as our Construction Manager. The contract is signed and we will be holding an organization and planning meeting with them by the end of December.

Our plans for January primarily center around selecting a architectural and design company that we can partner with for developing the detailed design of our new and renovated areas. The first step is sending out a Request for Quote, asking companies for their qualifications to design an educational facility, plus experience working with a church project.

Thank you for the support and confidence to start working this important project.

Worship & Music Board

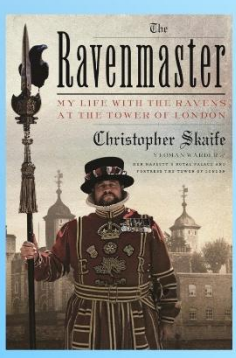
Altar Flowers & Eternal Candles for 2026!
The 2026 sign-up sheet is available on the bulletin board outside Janet's office.

Cost:
Flowers: $30 for 2 vases *(Please note that this is a decrease in cost from what was originally published.)*
Eternal Candle: $10 per month

You will receive a reminder in early January 2026 for January/February donations; then in early March for March/April, and so on.

Thank you and your family for signing up to beautify our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings with Altar Flowers and/or the Eternal Flame.

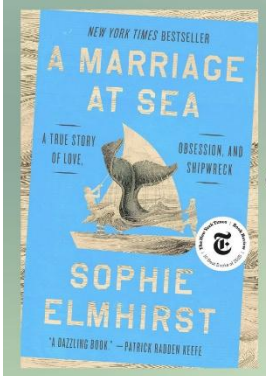
Women's Book Club
Tues. January 27@ 7:00PM
FCC3&4



Read ***The Ravenmaster My Life with the Ravens at the Tower of London***
by Christopher Skaife

Questions? Contact Janet Hernandez
618-310-9730 (cell), or email at
admincoordinator@faithofallon.org

Men's Book Club
January 28 @7PM



A Marriage at Sea
by Sophie Elmhirst

Questions? Contact Kevin Eiler 314-691-3114 (cell), or email at keiler3@yahoo.com or Phil Cyr 618-746-0173.

LWR QUILTERS

Next meeting is January 12 at 2PM in the Faith Center.
All are welcome; no sewing experience needed!

Birthday's and Anniversaries

Jan 2 Delores Wojtysiak
Jan 4 Marc Eccher
Jan 6 Scott Framsted
Jan 8 Abby Wood
Jan 9 Bill Turkington, Erik Reichert, Janet Middendorf
Jan 10 Tyler Lunning
Jan 15 Ben Poole, Louisa Brinkmeier, Heather Lindsey,
Jan 16 Evan Reichert
Jan 17 Elizabeth Reyna, Becky Ahlvin
Jan 18 Mike Engel, Keith Ballard
Jan 19 Evita Zimmerman, Arianna Zimmerman
Jan 21 Nolan Spicer, JoAnna Espique
Jan 22 Melanie Duitsman, Tucker Williams, Madelyn Cooper
Jan 23 Vaughn Davis, Emily Danner,
Robert Kennedy, Ken Hastey
Jan 24 Sophie Wichlac, Christopher Wichlac
Jan 25 Jonté Gray, Emily Scott
Jan 26 Marian Brinkmeier
Jan 27 Watson Partelow
Jan 29 Susan McKean
Jan 30 Jeremy Benedick
Jan 31 Dennis Knolhoff, Tessa Patten

Jan 4 Gary & Gretchen Best, 12 years
Jan 8 Dylan & Angela Magness, 5 years
Jan 17 Jim & Marilyn Campbell, 56 years
Jan 19 Russ & Joe Shepherd, 46 years
Jan 24 Phil & Debbie Cyr, 45 years

Prayers

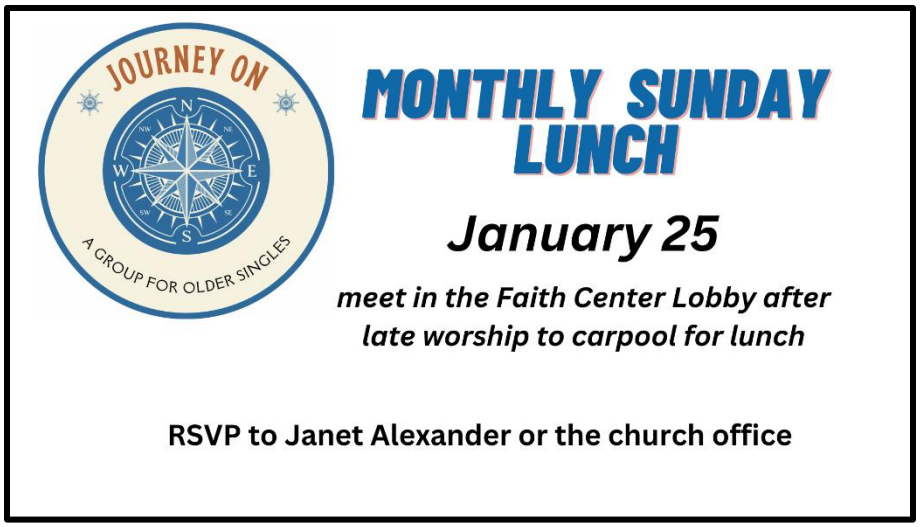
<u>Please notify the church office if any of these names can be taken off the list</u>

Health Concerns:

Jackie Mitchell, Joslyn Anderson, Janet Middendorf, Pat Schultz, Marie Blanchard, Jane Bergo, Diane Runyan, Kie Zelms, Jason Larson, Charlie Claxton, Bob Skogh, Jeremy Alf, Kendra Dhaene, Keith Hamann, Kathleen Reichert, Cindy Stepp, Barbie Hollis, Sheri Engel, Karen Miles, Marilyn Dichsen, Meg Corson, Bruce Moeller, Lou Ann Moeller, Taylor Torres, Lori Goessman, Onnie Wargo, Angie Brown, Rodney Brown

Grieving:

Denise Burton, loss of father
Carol Bandre, loss of sister
Debbie Cyr, loss of father
Family & friends of Terri Ahlvin
John & Sheila Hellrung, loss of nephew
Rodney Brown, loss of brother
Bill Brunner, loss of niece
Family & friends of Wendy McDonnell
Family & friends of Elaine Entrikin
Family & friends of Jerry Bowen
Lisa Melzer, loss of mother
Family & friends of Galen Pool
Family & friends of Bob Austen
Family & friends of Sandy Fix
Family & friends of Doug Bush
Charlotte Kraus, loss of sister
Carson Kenneth, loss of great-uncle
Family & friends of Jim Kraus



Community Meals
Mondays, January 5, 12, 26
5-6:30 pm, Faith Center

Come and enjoy a hot meal prepared for you, your family, friends, and anyone else.
Take-outs are always available.

Please spread the word - all are welcome!

If you want to represent Faith as a volunteer server, cleaner, or cook's helper on a Monday night, please contact Betsy Layfield at

betsylayfield@gmail.com or 618-791-5070.

FAITH'S SHOWER MINISTRY

Need a hot shower?

Need to do a couple loads of laundry?

Call 618-632-5562 to schedule an appointment

Faith Lutheran Church
520 E. Hwy 50 O'Fallon, IL

LOADS OF LOVE
a ministry of
Faith Lutheran Church

Healing Prayer
Every Monday During Community Meals
5-6:30 pm, FCC1

Are you suffering pain, disease, depression, spiritual issues, or anything else for which you'd like prayer? God wants to minister to you! The Faith Healing Team is offering Healing Prayer with the laying on of hands and anointing. Questions? Contact John Hellrung at john.hellrung@gmail.com.

Child care is available Sundays from birth to five years old during all worship services!
Contact Kristin Howe with your questions at nurserymanager@faithofallon.org or 618-972-8622.

Faith Lutheran Church
We exist to Nourish Minds, Bodies, and Souls

Church Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9 am - 3 pm
618-632-5562

Sunday Worship
9 and 10:30 am
Sunday School at 9 am

faith@faithofallon.org

Ministers: People of Faith
Senior Pastor: Rev. Candice Wassell

Newsletter articles due the
3rd Sunday of the month.

Newsletter Editor:
OPEN

FOLLOW US!

Website: www.faithofallon.org

Podcast: faithofallon.podbean.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FaithLutheranOFallon

Instagram: faithofallon

YouTube: FaithLutheranOFallon

Sign up for Mid-Week Update

Church App